



# U.S. Coast Guard Preventive Medicine Report

Armed Forces  
Epidemiological Board

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CAPT G. Iris Obrams



# “They did *what?*”

- March 18, 2004 voice mail report:
  - Dog taken aboard USCG cutter at sea off South American coast
  - Dog bit 20 people, then died
  - Crew threw carcass overboard



# Investigation Results

- Cutter had interdicted Guatemalan boat with 8 crew and young dog
- Dog and boat crew taken onto cutter
- Dog nipped at crew members
- Crew and detainees tried to restrain/muzzle, but dog was provoked and bit 20 persons
- Rabies vaccination status unknown



# The Question

- During or soon after muzzling attempts, dog died (broken neck, suffocation?)
- Crew threw dog carcass overboard, and HS not informed
- **Is rabies prophylaxis needed?**



# Answer: Yes

- ...Even though the bites were provoked
- Human Rabies Immune Globulin (HRIG) and Human Diploid Cell Vaccine (HDCV) procured from US Embassy and USN, respectively
- All Coastguardsmen with potential exposure given HRIG and first dose of HDCV
- All detainees refused shots



# Lessons

- Should dogs/animals be taken aboard?
- Do cutters need designated animal controller with training (restraint, muzzling)?
- Animal controller, as well as HS, should know to save carcass (head) for rabies testing
- Exposure reporting process in Service